

Armed with Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14-b

Halifax: 16 November 2008

Introduction:

Two weeks ago, we began looking at God's call for us to put on the armour that He provides for us so that we will be able stand in the day of evil...

- We saw that our enemies are powerful and that they have made many fall...
 - They can not always distinguish between those who are genuine believers and those who are not...
 - so they roam about in the earth seeking whom they may devour...
 - eagerly looking for an opportunity to sift us and to make us fall.
 - I explained to you that they often succeed...
 - causing those who are not truly in Christ to fall completely away—
 - as Judas or Simon Magnus did;
 - or causing those who *are* in Christ to fall into grievous sins that wound their conscience and hinder their testimony—
 - as David with his adultery or Peter with his denial of Christ or John Mark when he forsook his work.
- The threat of falling in battle is a real one,
 - and so we dare not ignore the call to arm ourselves...with the whole armour of God.
 - We cannot stand but in the strength of the Lord,
 - and this armour is the armour that He gives us to strengthen us...
 - We must put on every piece of it.
- With the call to arm yourselves, you must not expect a quiet stroll through life...
 - You are told to put on this armour for battle.
 - Your Christian life is warfare and you must be ready for it.
 - I explained to you that the Lord does not always defend us by keeping our enemies away—
 - Sometimes He does.
 - He had put a hedge around Job for a time to protect him from his enemies and he often puts a hedge around us too.
 - But as with Job, He sometimes even stirs up our enemies to come at us, to tempt us and to test us and to afflict us...

- And then His protection comes,
 - not as a hedge, but as the grace we need to stand...
 - He strengthens us in order that we may stand.
- In one respect, this is an even greater feat than fighting them off Himself!
 - It is a great thing if you are able to ward off enemies from the helpless,
 - but it is even a greater thing if you are able to empower the helpless one to stand on his own!
 - That is what our Lord does by supplying us with armour.
- But you ought not to expect His strengthening to come in the heat of the battle...
 - I don't mean that you ought not to look to Him to strengthen you then...
 - You should and He will...
 - In verse 18, you are told to pray always—both before the battle and in the heat of the battle...
 - But if you have not availed yourself of the armour that He supplies to strengthen you before the battle,
 - You have no reason to presume that He will strengthen you once the battle ensues.
 - Once the fray has begun, it is too late to put on your armour.
 - No soldier waits until the battle is engaged to arm himself...

Last week we looked at the first piece of armour that the Lord commands you to put on—

- and that was, the belt of truth.
 - I explained to you that this speaks of sincerity,
 - of being a disciple who is true...genuine—not a hypocrite...
 - one who is single-minded in your devotion to Christ so that you live simply—
 - not as one who is trying to serve two masters so that you waver back and forth,
 - but as one who is wholly devoted to the Lord.
 - If you are half-hearted when you go into battle,
 - If you are not sure you want to be all for Christ...
 - You will not be able to endure for long when the battle gets hot!

This week, we come to the second piece of armour:

- The breastplate of righteousness.
- If you are going to stand in the battle, you will need this righteousness.

I. What is the breastplate of righteousness?

A. First, let me define the terms...

1. What is the breastplate?

- The breastplate that was used at this time was sometimes made of shells or leather, but ordinarily of metal—
- The Romans used chain mail or scales so that it was flexible enough, yet still afforded protection.
- The breastplate extended from the neck down to the thighs and was connected onto the belt.
- It was also usually in two parts that were joined together by clasps, one for the front and one for the back.
- Obviously, it was necessary to protect the vital organs of the wearer against flying arrows and such.

TRANS> So that is the breastplate.

2. What is righteousness?

a. Righteousness is the right standing a person has with respect to the law...

- The righteous person is right with the law—
- He has met the standard that the law requires of him.

b. Now of course there are many standards of righteousness...

- A person can be righteous in the eyes of the members of his society...
 - Or he can be righteous in his own eyes...
 - But true righteousness is based on God's standard—
 - He alone defines true righteousness because He is the Creator of us who alone can declare what is required of us...
 - He is the one who will Judge us at last.
 - We are wrong to think that the Supreme Court is on earth...
 - The King of Glory will come on the last day and He will have the final say.
 - From His court, there will be no appeal...
 - Every earthly judge serves under Him, and each one will be called to account for how true he has been to His standard.
 - God's standard of righteousness is the only one that matters.

- c. Though we have not fallen far from God's standard of righteousness,
 - It should be understood that Adam was created in true righteousness as the image of God.
 - The Lord endowed Him with a right standing and a right heart from the first...
 - But he fell into rebellion and cast off the Lord.
 - By His rebellion, He brought corruption to all his posterity...
 - and with that corruption the curse of God.
 - Therefore, God, the only judge,
 - has declared that there is none righteous, no not one...
 - He tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
 - He says that there is not a righteous man on earth who does not sin...
 - None but Christ...

TRANS> Nevertheless...

B. There are two ways that persons are said to be righteous in the Bible...

1. First, persons are called righteous who have Christ's righteousness imputed to them.
 - a. This is that righteousness that Paul describes in Romans 3...
 - Maybe you would like to look at Romans 3 for a minute...
- 1) In verse 10-20,
 - Paul has just declared that no flesh can be justified in God's sight by the deeds of the law.
 - That is, now that we are fallen, no body can make himself righteous by keeping the law...
 - The law has been broken and we have no way to deal with our sin...
 - and even if we did, we have no strength to live up to the standard any way.
 - 2) So in 3:21, Paul describes another righteousness
 - He describes this righteousness as:
 - "the righteousness of God apart from the law...even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and upon all who believe."
 - He is saying that whoever believes on Christ for righteousness will be declared righteous in God's sight—everyone who believes!

- 3) In verse 24, Paul goes on to explain
- that this righteousness is freely imparted by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus by propitiation through His blood.
 - In other words, Christ has satisfied God's holy justice against our sin by the shedding of His blood...
 - This righteousness cost Him dearly,
 - but to us it is absolutely free...
 - We are made righteous by the work of another in our behalf.
 - This righteousness is imputed to you as soon as you believe—and it is perfect and complete.
- 4) This righteousness is what Luther helpfully called an alien righteousness...
- By that, he meant that it is a righteousness that the believer has from outside himself—
 - That is why it is said to be imputed—because it is created to us from outside of us...
 - It is the righteousness of Christ credited to all who believe to put us in a right standing with God...

- b. I hope that all of you have this alien righteousness through Christ!
- All you have to do is trust in Him for it!
 - It is vitally important for you to have it! More important than anything else!
 - Apart from it, you remain under God's wrath and curse.
 - And on the Day of Judgement,
 - you will be rudely awakened to the full implications of this and of what it means to bear God's curse forever!
 - Do not be found on that day without the righteousness of Christ!
 - I urge you to repent and believe on Christ.
 - There is no other way for you to be righteous in God's sight.

TRANS> But there *is* a second way that persons are said to be righteous according to the Bible.

2. Secondly, they are sometimes said to be righteous in their conduct.

- a. This righteousness is a righteousness that those who believe in Christ are being renewed in...
 - It is the righteousness that is described in Ephesians 4:24 where we are commanded to:
 - Eph 4:24: “put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”
 - John speaks of this righteousness in 1 John 3:7 where he says:
 - 1 John 3:7: “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.”
 - You see that he is not speaking of imputed righteousness here,
 - but of the practice of righteousness.

TRANS> Persons who believe (who have Christ’s righteousness imputed) are sometimes said to have this righteousness in their conduct...

- b. Let me show you a few examples...
 - In Luke 1:6, the Scripture says that Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist,
 - “were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”
 - In Ezekiel 14:13-14, the Lord says this of Noah, Daniel, and Job:
 - Ezekiel 14:13-14: Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.
 - In other words,
 - the Lord would bring these righteous men from the destruction as he brought Lot out in the destruction of Sodom.
 - In the book that bears his name,
 - Job is singled out as a righteous man in Job 1:8 where it says:
 - Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

TRANS> Many other examples could be found...

- c. But you must understand that those who are called righteous in their conduct are righteous are only righteous by God’s grace.

- They are absolutely dependent on Him for their righteousness...
- 1) Their righteous conduct itself is a gift of God's grace...
 - It began when the Lord gave His Spirit to them to change them...
 - He changed them so that they acknowledged their sin and their need of Christ and trusted in Him alone for salvation.
 - This is a huge change—
 - It is a transformation of their life—a new birth—a new heart...
 - It is a change from darkness to light...
 - from unrighteousness to righteousness!
 - It is the change that is spoken of in Ephesians 2 when it says that the Lord has made persons alive who were once dead in trespasses and sins.
 - Christ has imparted new life to them,
 - and now they are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared for them to walk in...
 - Relatively speaking, they were sinners and now they are righteous because they live before God's standard...

TRANS> It is important to understand that this righteousness in conduct cannot exist apart from faith in Christ for imputed righteousness.

- 2) Righteousness in conduct begins with dependence on Christ for imputed righteousness...
 - And it continues with dependence on Christ for imputed righteousness.
 - There is no righteousness in conduct apart from imputed righteousness because the most wicked thing a person can do is go on as if he thinks he has no need of Christ!
 - We are sinners!
 - And if we are going to be righteous in our conduct, the very first thing we must do is be reconciled to God through Christ!
 - To go on as if our sin against him were inconsequential is to go on in extreme wickedness...
 - Besides that, the very grace that is needed to live a righteous life comes only from Christ...
 - Unless you are trusting in Him for salvation (pardon of sin),
 - you have no access to His grace that transforms your life.

TRANS> And so you see that the second kind of righteousness (a blameless life) is dependent on the first.

- No one can have a blameless life unless his behaviour includes a dependence on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - Even after you have been justified, you must realise that all your righteousness by your conduct is dung when it comes to justifying you before God.
 - Your right standing with God is not based on the righteous acts that you have done...
 - it is based on God's mercy who has imputed the righteousness of Christ to you through faith.
 - If you think you can be justified by your own deeds, you are greatly mistaken.
- But what about the breastplate of righteousness...

C. What sort of righteousness is the breastplate of righteousness?

- Is it the imputed righteousness of Christ or is it the righteousness of a blameless life?
 1. I would submit to you that it refers to blameless conduct.
 - a. I would argue for this because it is something that we can remove and that we are warned to be sure we keep on.
 - The imputed righteousness of Christ, once you have it, can never be removed.
 - Now it could be argued that you may or may not use imputed righteousness as armour—in other words, you may go into battle as one who is not trusting in it.
 - b. But then it is not righteousness that is removed (perish the thought), but faith or dependency upon righteousness,
 - and that is what is called for in verse 16 when you are told to take the shield of faith...
 - It is not imputed righteousness that can be left off, but faith that can wane.
 - c. In many ways, I wanted to preach on imputed righteousness from this text because it is such a marvellous doctrine...
 - A message that is true to the analogy of faith could be preached on either sort of righteousness from this passage...
 - but my exegetical conscience would not allow it.

- The majority of commentators, including the great puritan William Gurnall who wrote sixteen chapters on the breastplate of righteousness alone, are in agreement that the breastplate of righteousness refers to righteous conduct.
2. But please remember that righteous conduct cannot exist without faith in the righteousness of Christ...
- a. You are not blameless in your conduct unless you are resting in the righteousness of Christ alone.
 - That is the very foundation of righteous conduct.
 - b. So if you are to have this breastplate of righteousness,
 - you must be one who is resting upon Christ alone for your acceptance with God—
 - Yes, it involves living a life that keeps all of God’s commandments...
 - loving your neighbour, loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,
 - but it never forgets that after all has been done, it still comes short of the glory of God...
 - and that without Christ’s righteousness,
 - all is lost.

TRANS> Okay then, having seen what the breastplate of righteousness is,

- I now want you to consider this second question:

II. How does the breastplate of righteousness protect you?

- We will look at three ways...

A. First, the breastplate of righteousness protects you because it establishes you in a habit of righteousness.

1. In Tim 4:7 calls you to “exercise yourself toward godliness.”
 - Hebrews 5:14 speaks of those who “have their senses *exercised* to discern both good and evil.”
 - You gain strength by exercising—strength to be godly...
 - If you are in the habit of loose walking—of carelessness in your Christian walk,
 - of letting lots of things go—

- do not expect that you will be able to stand in the evil day!
2. Take Joseph as an example.
- a. Do you remember what happened to him?
 - He was sold into slavery in Egypt, and was put under a master who came to appreciate him and advanced him to a high rank among his servants...
 - b. But it so happened that his master's wife was attracted to him...
 - and whenever the occasion presented itself, she earnestly enticed Joseph to have sexual relations with her.
 - c. Now I want you to suppose that prior to this,
 - Joseph had been feeling sorry for himself—being a slave in Egypt and unable to marry among his people...
 - and suppose in his pity, he had been indulging himself in lustful thoughts...
 - You can be sure that this woman had sent many flirtatious looks his way before she spoke to him...
 - Suppose that Joseph had enjoyed this and indulged in a little fantasy...
 - What would have happened in the evil day of temptation?
 - Do you think Joseph would have been able to stand?
 - Do you think he would have been able to say:
 - Gen. 39:9: How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
 - I think not!
 - Such a statement would have been impossible!
 - If he had been sinning against God along the way,
 - what difference would it make to sin now?
 - to go a little further?
3. If you have a habit of sinning, it will be much easier to sin whenever temptation comes...
- Many think there are certain sins they would never commit...
 - but if you indulge yourself in a lot of little sins, you will find that you have no armour to resist in the day of temptation...
 - Many a young woman thought she would never give herself up to promiscuity when she first began to dress seductively...

- And once she had given herself up to promiscuity, she was quite sure that she would never have an abortion...
 - but once she conceived, she found that she had no armour to stand against the temptation.
 - If you have the breastplate of righteousness,
 - a habit of righteousness, by the grace of Christ,
 - temptations will not so easily overtake you.
- B. Secondly, the breastplate of righteousness protects you because it gives you peace and assurance which you will not want to abandon.
1. When you wear the breastplate of righteousness, it gives you assurance of your right standing with God.
 - a. John emphasises this in his first epistle...
 - In 1 John 3, he states very plainly that those who practice righteousness do so because they have truly been born of God—
 - It is the only way they could live a blameless life.
 - He says:
 - 1 John 3:7-8: Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
 - Now of course John is not talking about any sin at all, but is talking about the sin of casting off obedience to God to go our own way...
 - He is talking about lawlessness.
 - In John 3:18, he speaks of how righteous conduct will give us assurance that we know the Lord...
 - 1 John 3:18-19: My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.
 - b. Peter teaches the same thing in 2 Peter 1 when he calls you to make your calling and election sure by doing righteousness!
 - As you by grace follow Christ in obedient living,
 - you will be assured that you have His grace—that you are indeed among His elect...
 2. But how does this help you to stand in the evil day?

- a. Well, it is in this...
 - The assurance that you are love of God is such a sweet assurance—
 - it is such a wonderful consolation to know that you are loved by Him and are able to walk with Him—
 - The last thing you want to do is sin it away!
 - To cloud up your prayers and your confidence!

- b. And so when the temptation comes, you will be once again as Joseph was...
 - You will say,
 - “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

 - Joseph obviously cherished his relationship with God...
 - Even though he was in a situation where he might have despaired of God’s favour,
 - instead, by grace, he wore the breastplate of righteousness.

 - And because it gave him peace with God, he was able to keep on serving God despite all the trials that he had...
 - He knew that he was a child of the covenant because he was able to live a righteous life by the grace of God.

TRANS> And that naturally leads us to the next point...

- C. The breastplate of righteousness protects you because it gives you confidence against those who would accuse you.
 - 1. If you are not living a righteous life,
 - If you are wavering in a few places,
 - you will have a hard time standing when you are accused of wrongdoing because you have no foundation of right doing.

 - a. You will say to me,
 - “Well of course—you have already fallen so how could you stand when you are accused?”
 - But I am talking about falling into greater sins when you are accused.

 - b. One of Satan’s crafty devices is to call the good that we do evil...
 - He accuses you for the good that you do to try to make you think it is evil.

- For example, if you are sincerely keeping the Lord's Day and your sister accuses you of being hateful because you refuse to bring your son to "*his own cousins*" birthday party on Sunday,
 - she is trying to make you feel guilty for doing what is right.
 - I am sure that all of you who are following Christ have been accused of such things...
- 1) But if you are living a blameless life—
 - that is, if you have the testimony of a good conscience that as far as you know, you are walking in God's commandments...
 - Her accusation will not easily cause you to fall.
 - It will not be so easy for her to manipulate you.
 - 2) The Corinthians found that they could not manipulate Paul when they tried to accuse him of not giving proper care to them—
 - They were trying to accuse him of not loving them because he did not come when he first said he would come...
 - But instead of letting the accusation stand, Paul held on to his integrity and said:
 - 2 Cor 1:12: "For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you."
 - You see how Paul's integrity—of a clear conscience—causes their accusations to bounce off of him...

TRANS> If you have this testimony of a clear conscience, you will be able to stand when your sister false accuses you of being mean-spirited.

- 3) But if you have compromised in other areas, it will be very difficult for you.
 - For example, if you just let junior go to the hockey tournament the Sunday before,
 - you will have little strength to stand up to your sister...
 - especially if she knows what you did and uses it against you...

TRANS> That is how accusations against a bad conscience can lead to greater sin.

- There is another slightly different way the testimony of pure conscience will protect you in the evil day.

2. Job was challenged when he was called to suffer...
 - a. The goal of Satan in afflicting him was bring him to extreme discouragement so that he would turn from following the Lord—turn against the Lord...
 - There are those, you know, who because of trials, fall into such bitterness that they cease to walk with Him...
 - Job's wife put the temptation into words when she said,
 - "Curse God and die."
 - b. And Job's friends made matters even worse...
 - They came to Job and accused him of wrongdoing...
 - Their message was,
 - "The Lord would never have brought all this trouble upon you unless you are out of favour with him."
 - Job felt so helpless against these accusations because he was not in rebellion against the Lord—yet, the Lord was afflicting him.
 - But Job got out his breastplate of righteousness and defended his integrity before them!
 - Job was right to do that!
 - The Lord Himself affirmed that Job was blameless.
 - He was not afflicted for wrong that he had done,
 - but he was afflicted as a test of his integrity and commitment to God no matter what.
 - But if the accusations of Job's friends had not run up against his breastplate of righteousness...
 - Job might have concluded that God was indeed against him and that he might as well stop serving Him.
 - If his right standing with the Lord was destroyed for no reason that he could determine, what would be the use of going on?
 - Job wrestled with these thoughts!
 - But Job told his fiends that he would never give up the testimony of his good conscience:
 - Job 27:5-6: "Far be it from me That I should say you are right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; My heart shall not reproach *me* as long as I live."
 - Learn from this not to do an artificial confession.

- You can only confess to wrongs that you believe you have committed.

TRANS> So you see in all this how helpful it is to have this breastplate of righteousness.

- I am sure that all of you who love the Lord want to maintain this piece of armour,
 - so for my last point, I want to answer this question:

III. How do you maintain the breastplate of righteousness?

A. First of all, be diligent to obey in the little things—every day...

1. Don't think you can whip out the breastplate of righteousness in the day of evil if you haven't been wearing it all along.
 - Once you are in the fray, it is too late to arm yourself.
 - That is why you need to see that you have this armour on now!
2. I warn you, watch the little things! Maintain your righteousness each day!
 - Indulge in a little bitterness now because you are having a bad day—
 - you will not stand when real trouble comes.
 - Indulge in a little lust now that you think you can contain—
 - watch out when a temptation to comes that could destroy your marriage!
 - Relinquish self-control in your eating or your drinking—
 - gluttony and drunkenness will consume you when the battle rages...
 - Children, let that whinny, sour attitude set in for a little while...
 - It won't be long until you are letting angry words fly at your brothers and sisters—
 - or even worse, that you are hitting them and kicking them...
 - or even worse still, that you begin to curse your parents!

TRANS> What a huge monster a little sin can breed.

3. Do not be deceived.
 - Little sins grow into big sins...
 - By God's grace you may have endured for a long time, but beware!
 - If you keep on giving way, the day will come when you will find you are without strength.

- B. Secondly, be careful to keep a short account with the Lord.
1. Maintaining integrity and a blameless does not mean being perfect...
 - It means that you deal with your sin whenever it appears...
 2. By confessing your sin to God as soon as it happens, you can maintain a good conscience before Him—
 - 1 John 1:9 speaks of those sins that break our fellowship with God when it says:
 - 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
 - That is the wonderful thing about forgiveness!
 - If you confess your sins as one who is trusting in Christ, God has bound Himself by His covenant promise to forgive you...
 - And He will!
 - You can start over again with a clean slate...
 - Of course this does not mean that you can plan to sin by saying,
 - “I can confess it afterward.”
 - That would be an evidence of insincerity—
 - but whenever you sin, if you confess your sin, the Lord will restore you once again.
- C. Thirdly, if you want to maintain the breastplate of righteousness, make the resolution of Paul your own...
- When he stood before those who hated him, he spoke of his resolution and it was this:
 - Acts 24:16: “This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”
 - That was a resolution to be righteous in his conduct.
 - You can only do this by the grace of God...
 - but oh what a sweet thing it is to have the testimony of a clear conscience.
 - To know that by His grace, you are able to walk in communion with Him and to have the light of His countenance upon you...
 - to know that you are actually pleasing the One whose enemy you once were and whose enmity is to be feared more than anything.
 - Now, in Christ you can walk with Him as a servant of righteousness.
 - Resolve that you will endeavour to maintain a conscience without offense before Him.

D. Fourthly, if you want to maintain this breastplate of righteousness, look to Christ!

1. Look to His example.

- In Christ, you see the beauty of righteousness!
 - You see the whole law perfectly fulfilled...
 - You see a love that is so deep that it goes to the cross for its friends...
 - You see a love for the Father that bears the curse in obedience to Him for His honour and glory...
 - You see gracious words, compassion, purity, zeal, honesty.
 - There is no life like His life!
- Look at this life of righteousness and integrity...
 - Love it and imitate it.
 - You are called to be like Him—to live in the beauty of holiness as He lived.

TRANS> And having looked to His example,

- You will say,
 - How can I ever do that?

2. Then look to His strength...

- He promises to work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure...
- He promises to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him to work His marvellous fruits into your life...
- He promises to keep you through faith until the end...
 - He has predestined you to be conformed to His image...
 - He promises that you will be like Him.
- In tender love, He has called you into His fellowship that you may see His glory and the glory of the Father...
 - He promises that the same power that raised Him from the dead is at work in you...
 - to work in you that new life that God has called you live.
 - to renew you in righteousness after the image of Him that created you.

Conclusion:

My brothers and sisters,

- surely with such a Saviour with such an example before your eyes...
 - surely you will want to wear this armour—this breastplate of righteousness!
- He calls you to wear it—
 - It is very beautiful and it is very helpful to enable you to stand...
 - See then that you are clothed with it.

Armed with Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14-b

Halifax: 16 November 2008

Psalm 15, 25 A, 25-D, 26, 40:10-11, 43:3, 45:4, 51:6, 57, 61:7, 85:10-11, 86, 89:14, 91:4, 119:30, 138, 145:18,

Job 27:1-6, 31:1-40, Eph 6:10-14.

Gathering Music	Hymn 589 <i>Fill Thou My Life, O Lord My God</i>
Psalm of Praise	Psalm 97-C
Psalm of Supplication	Psalm 25-D
Psalm of Confession	Psalm 26-A & B

Introduction:

GURNALL notes that there is no armour to keep you from suffering. In fact, the call to wear it suggests that there will be suffering—you are in a battle!

- You are not advised to put on armour to sit by the fireside—but to engage in conflict.
 - Most men are more tender of their skin than their conscience—and would prefer armour that would keep them from suffering and death than armour that would keep them from sin and Satan.

HEND> suggests that the imagery was not likely taken from the guard to which Paul was chained. He would not need such attire to guard prisoners.

- JRS> But the Roman soldier would have been a very familiar site—in victory parades and in the sending forth of armies.
- HEND notes that Paul’s description is slightly different than the description of Polybius who describes the Roman soldier’s armour.
 - HEND says that Paul is thinking of the Roman, but is heavily influenced by the OT in the selection of His metaphors:
 - Isa 11:5: “Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.”
 - Isa 49:2: “And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.””
 - Isa 59:17: “For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak.”
 - Paul also uses this imagery elsewhere:

- 1 Thes 5:8: “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.” (1Th 5:8 NKJV)
- 2 Cor 6:7: “by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,”
- 2 Tim 2:3-4: “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”

HEND> The order is interesting...

- Roughly, the order follows the order in which the items would be put on—the belt, then the breastplate, then the shoes, then the shield, then the helmet, and finally the sword.
 - This is not *necessarily* the sequence, as the shield might follow the helmet, but it is a logical order.

HEND poses a question for each piece of armour...

JRS> Last time we saw that we need God’s armour if we are going to stand...

- There are many who don’t stand (liberal churches, covetous individuals).
- We cannot expect to stand in our own strength, it is only in the armour of God that He gives us if only we will put it on.
- This week, we will look at the first piece of armour described.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

14 sthte oun perizwsamenoi thn osfun umwn en alhyeia kai endusamenoi ton ywraka thv dikaiosunhv

BRUCE> It is truth and righteousness as ethical qualities that are meant, rather than truth of doctrine and justification by faith; though the latter is not unrelated to the ethical qualities.

having girded your waist with truth

- FOULKES> The Bible uses the metaphor of girding quite often because it was necessary to bind up the flowing garments of those days before work of any kind could be done.
- JRS> Nothing is worse than a half-hearted Christian—
 - If the City of God, if Christ and God’s glory are not really very important to you...
 - If you are here for friends or for improvement to your family or for worldly gain, you will not last... As soon as the battle turns, so will you...

- If God's ways are inconvenient, disagreeable, too difficult—you will defect to the world.
- You will even do this if you find a better opportunity in the world than what you came to get from Christ. (eg Demas). I say “what you came to get” because you did not really come to get what He gives. If you had, you would not depart because there would be nothing comparable to what He gives His own. Those who depart are those who came to get something else.
- Christianity is not for dabblers!
 - It is warfare! If you are not fully committed, don't even bother. You will not last.
 - Give me a sincere man over a bold man or a strong man or a wise man—the sincere man will be a much better soldier.
 - I hope you are sincere, and if not, I hope you will repent!
- JRS> Joshua called for truth and sincerity among the people upon entering the land:
 - Jos 24:14: Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!
 - The context shows that this had to do with not worshipping idols and the gods of the people around them.
- JRS> David also calls for truth as wholehearted sincerity.
 - 1Sa 12:24: Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.
 - 1Ki 2:4: "that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'
 - 1Ki 3:6: And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.
 - 2Ki 20:3: "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.
 - Ps 51:6: Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.
 - Ps 61:5-7: For You, O God, have heard my vows; You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name. You will prolong the king's life, His years as many generations. He shall abide before God forever. Oh, prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him!

- Ps 86:11: Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.
- Pr 3:3: Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart,
- Pr 20:28 ¶ Mercy and truth preserve the king, And by lovingkindness he upholds his throne.
- Joh 3:21: But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.
- Joh 8:44-46: You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?
- Joh 16:13: However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.
- Joh 17:17: Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
- Joh 17:19: And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.
- Joh 18:37: Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."
- Joh 18:38: Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.
- 1Co 5:8: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
- 1Jo 1:8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 1Jo 2:4: He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
 - These words show that truth is something one holds within—it is sincerity, but is also holding to what God has revealed—John 17: Your word is truth.
- JRS> “Walking in truth” is both walking in sincerity and walking according to God’s revelation.
 - The two cannot really be separated. A person who is sincere will know the truth (as Jesus told Pilate). One of our main problems with deception is that we have a pretended sincerity that actually works against true sincerity. We are deceived into thinking that we are being sincere when we follow the deceptions of our heart or of those around us rather than the pure word of God which is self-attesting and which bears witness to the truth.

- JRS> The Bible often speaks of truth being something that protects us...
 - But how does it protect us?
 - Well, it would seem that when we set out with an undivided heart, we are far less likely to be led astray. If our singular purpose is to glorify God and we keep our eyes fixed on this in sincerity—if we are true to our Lord—we will not be likely to stumble.
 - And not only that, but such sincerity will stir up the Lord to protect us also.
- JRS> A great defect of Saul was this want of truth.
 - He always had something other than the glory of God that He was in pursuit of, whereas David was a man after God’s own heart.
 - Herod is a lot like Saul—he had the trouble of trying to please his wife and his friends and had all sorts of conflicting considerations. Pilate was the same way. Those who live by policy are always in a state of perplexity.
- JRS> It is interesting that the belt is used here, for the belt is the thing which sort of keeps everything together...
 - Apparently it not only hitched up the clothes so that they were not in the way, but it also helped support the breastplate and was the place where the sword was hung.
 - Sincerity it like that. If it is wanting, then a person is not together—they are divided, pulled this way and that way.
- HEND QUESTION: Do I really want to fight him (Satan) at all? Am I sincere about this spiritual warfare?
- HEND> The girdle or belt was fastened around the short tunic worn by the soldier so that he was ready for action. Both the breastplate and sword were also attached to this belt. The belt was very basic—so also is truthfulness.
 - HEND> Truthfulness is *sincerity of mind and heart*. It involves the removal of all guile and hypocrisy.
- FOULKES> We may conclude that it is not the truth of the gospel that is alluded to, but the undergirding of truth in the sense of integrity, “truth in the inward parts” of which Psalm 51:6 speaks.
 - GOUDGE> As the girdle ... gives ease and freedom of movement, so it is the truth which gives this freedom with ourselves, with our neighbours, and with God. Lack of perfect sincerity hampers us at every turn.
- EAD> It is not simply integrity or sincerity, but the assured conviction that you believe, and that it is God’s truth you believe. Such a sincere persuasion binds tightly the other pieces of armour; “trussing up his loins,” gives the combatant alertness and

buoyancy in the battle, and enables him to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ.” He feels supported and braced by his conscious knowledge and reception of the truth, while error and self-delusion lead to disarmament and cowardice.

- JRS> Note here the comment about *reception* of truth. This is, you see, a major problem when we do not have a teachable spirit—
 - JRS> Those who have shut themselves off to truths they find difficult or unattractive will lose confidence very quickly. For personal reasons or because of their own perverted ideas about justice or fairness or whatever, or because of pressure from relatives, they avoid certain doctrines, and this affects everything—they lose their nerve and their confidence because they are not resting fully on God’s truth.
 - We have to embrace doctrines we may not like or find difficult to understand, waiting on the Lord to help us learn to love them and then to understand them better.
 - JRS> A problem with truth would include a struggle with the full acceptance of basic truth—our own sinfulness, God’s holiness and sovereignty, and such.
 - If a person is wavering in these areas, he will have a very difficult time doing what he is called to do.

- SCRIPTURE>

- Eph 4:15: “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—”
- Eph 4:25: “Therefore, putting away lying, “*Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,*” for we are members of one another.”
- Eph 5:6: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”
- Eph 5:9: “(for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),”
- JRS> The Lord preserves those are sincere toward Him.
 - Psalm 145:18-20: “The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The LORD preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.”
- JRS> Because sincerity is important, we must see that we maintain it:
 - Psalm 18:23: “I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.”
- JRS> Sincerity is so important. The church really is full of hypocrites—I mean, just look at us! There is a lot of insincerity in us, isn’t there? Consider how much better your outward behaviour is then your inward thoughts. God calls for truth in the inward parts.
 - JRS> Jesus differentiates between the believer and the unbeliever as those who are of the truth and those who are not of the truth. They hear His voice because

they are of the truth. The Spirit of God has worked in them and they now know the truth.

- This is a huge transformation because we go from one who is basically a truth suppressor to one who is a truth recipient. Instead of avoiding and denying, we come and we receive.
- BAYNE/JRS> The Devil will try to foist sincerity away from us...
 - By tempting us to pursue other things
 - By corrupting the truth so that it is not so clear to us
- BAYNE> How can we keep this girdle of truth?
 - 1) By considering the woeful curse that belongs to the contrary (God detests hypocrisy)
 - 2) By considering the blessedness of sincerity: Ps 111: Blessed are the upright in heart.
 - 3) In our common daily duties to labour thus:
 - a. to perform them with the heart
 - b. as in the sight of God
 - c. to His glory, for this will make the grace of truth to be deeply rooted in us.
- Four ways to expose our need for greater sincerity
 - 1) See how careless we are in our spiritual actions (prayer for example)
 - 2) We deal more with sin that exposes us to disgrace in the eyes of others than with the principle within
 - 3) See our want of affection for God—we do not burn with indignation when He is wronged, we do not praise Him with a whole heart,
 - 4) Much of what we do is a show... we make a semblance of reverence, but how far it is from the heart. We are more keen to do many things because of what others might think of us if we neglect than because of our love for God.

breastplate of righteousness

- *breastplate*
 - BARNES> The word rendered here as “breastplate” **θώραξ** thōrax denoted the “cuirass,” Lat.: lorica, or coat of mail; i. e., the armor that covered the body from the neck to the thighs, and consisted of two parts, one covering the front and the other the back. It was made of rings, or in the form of scales, or of plates, so fastened together that they would be flexible, and yet guard the body from a sword, spear, or arrow.
- HEND QUESTION: Am I living the kind of life that enables me to engage in this conflict?
- JRS> The question would arise here—is this imputed righteousness or imparted righteousness?

- CAL, HEND, WESCOTT say that it is imparted.
- LENSKI says that it is imputed.
- Could it be both? The two cannot be separated, for we do not have imputed righteousness until we have been given a new heart that enables us to believe in Christ and receive Him, and to go on trusting Him. And the fruit of that new heart is going to be an upright life. Our righteousness in both cases is from Christ, who died for us and intercedes for us, and who gives us a new life in the Spirit.
- CAL> Some imagine that this refers to a freely bestowed righteousness, or the imputation of righteousness, by which pardon of sin is obtained. But such matters ought not, I think, to have been mentioned on the present occasion; for the subject now under discussion is a blameless life.
- EAD understands this as the righteousness of Christ, pointing out that the definite article sets it apart as such.
 - EAD also asks, “What Christian can boast of entire rectitude? But when the justifying righteousness of Christ is assumed as a breastplate by sinners, they can defy the assaults of the tempter. To every insinuation that they are vile, guilty, worthless, and perverse; so beset with sin, and under such wrath that God will repulse them, they oppose the free and perfect righteousness of their redeemer, which is “upon them.” (Rom 3:22).
- BARNES> Integrity, holiness, purity of life, sincerity of piety. The breast-plate defended the vital parts of the body; and the idea here may be that the integrity of life, and righteousness of character, is as necessary to defend us from the assaults of Satan, as the coat of mail was to preserve the heart from the arrows of an enemy. It was the incorruptible integrity of Job, and, in a higher sense, of the Redeemer himself, that saved them from the temptations of the devil. And it is as true now that no one can successfully meet the power of temptation unless he is righteous.
- BAYNE speaks of a three-fold righteousness:
 - First, there is imputed righteousness, imputed by faith—but this cannot be what is spoken of here because this is the shield of faith...
 - Second, there is righteousness that is inherent in us (begun in us by God—Eph 4:24), but this cannot be either because the new creature is the one who puts on the armour, and so must be distinguished from his armour.
 - JRS> This is how Bayne avoids the problem of having the armour be the same thing that is being defended.
 - Third, there is righteousness of course, or conversation or work. (1 John 3:7—doing righteousness).
- BAYNE> Into this part of our furniture, three parts are enfolded:

- First, for the time past, a testimony excusing us...
 - 2 Cor 1:12: “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.”
 - 1 Cor 4:3-4: “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.” For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
 - 2 Peter 1:10: “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;”
 - 1 John 3:7: “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.”
- Second, for the time to come, a purpose to avoid all evil and to do what is good as Paul to the Antiochians:
 - Ac 11:23: When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.
 - Also there is the example of Joseph who said, “How can I do this great wickedness and so sin against God?”
- Third, in respect to our daily weakness there must be sorrow and humble confession of sin with seeking pardon—to refresh our armour.
 - Paul did this continually as Romans 7 shows.
- BAYNE brings forth several objections that may be raised against this teaching:
 - Obj. 1: The Devil will convince you that there is no need to be concerned for this armour of righteousness, you have Christ who died for you and He will not lose what He had bought.—yet, Christ came to save those who fear Him.
 - Obj. 2: The devil will persuade you to accept a general profession with little more. To be satisfied with a partial righteousness.
 - Obj. 3: He will try to make us weary of bearing this armour (but Christ is the author and finisher and will not let us fall—plus the comfort of a good conscience will preserve us.
 - Obj. 4: He will try to get you to despair because your righteousness is not perfect... but we must never think we stand before God by this righteousness—it is but dung. Yet, that does not render it useless altogether: It testifies to a true faith; and it pleases God as Enoch and Job and many of the Kings of Israel and Paul and others did because of the mercy of Christ to cover our sins.
- BAYNE> How do we maintain it?
 - Labour to give obedience in the least things—for little sins will prepare the way to greater. If you begin to live politically...

- Some have a good outward profession, are honest, good churchmen, just in their dealings, but they have no repentance from dead works, not earnestness about righteousness and so no protection.
- Renew a daily sorrow for your ordinary and smaller offences.
 - This Paul did as Romans 7 shows
- Consider what secure and comfortable courses we will have if we keep this purpose and practice all good conscience, and what a bitterness it is to have our conscience accuse us.
 - Acts 24:16: ““This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”
 - Phil 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”
 - Luke 1:6: “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”
- JRS> Righteousness (integrity) really affects your ministry to others (and to yourself)
 - Parents, what happens if you are justifying grumbling in your own life? Well, when you see it in your children, you are not going to be able to address it in them.
 - What happens to the person who is casual about drunkenness? It will be very easy to fall into it.
 - or that one that justifies loose thoughts?
 - or the one that allows a little bitterness?
 - or the one that allows lets angry words go without repentance?
 - or the one who relinquishes self-control—in eating?
 - or the one who indulges in self-pity?
 - or the one who overlooks the needs of others? What will happen if real sacrifice is called for (say, you are tortured unless you betray your brothers and sisters). You can’t put on the armour once you are in the fray!
- GILL> it seems best to understand this of the righteousness of Christ, which being imputed by God, and received by faith, is a guard against, and repels the accusations and charges of Satan, and is a security from all wrath and condemnation.
- HENRY> Righteousness must be our breast-plate. The breast-plate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is our breast-plate against the arrows of divine wrath. The righteousness of Christ implanted in us is our breast-plate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. The apostle explains this in [1Th 5:8](#), *Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*. Faith and love include all Christian graces; for by faith we are united to Christ and by love to our

brethren. These will infer a diligent observance of our duty to God, and a righteous deportment towards men, in all the offices of justice, truth, and charity.

- CLARKE> The word righteousness, **δικαιοσύνη**, we have often had occasion to note, is a word of very extensive import: it signifies the principle of righteousness; it signifies the practice of righteousness, or living a holy life; it signifies God's method of justifying sinners; and it signifies justification itself. Here it may imply a consciousness of justification through the blood of the cross; the principle of righteousness or true holiness implanted in the heart; and a holy life, a life regulated according to the testimonies of God.
- POOLE> righteousness of conversation, consisting both in a resolvedness for good, and repentance for evil done, which is as a breastplate (that piece of armour which covers the whole breast and belly) to a Christian; that resolvedness against sin fencing him against temptation, and the conscience of well-doing against the accusations of men and devils: see #1Co 4:3,4 1Jo 3:7.
 - 1 Cor 4:3: But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
 - 1 Jo 3:7: Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.
- ECN> Be it observed, that all we have just said is true of each and every Christian; for he is in the truth, he has righteousness by faith, he possesses the gospel of peace. But the apostle desires that we should use these graces in our practical walk. If our hearts are guided by the Spirit of Jesus, we have the consciousness of walking in practical righteousness in all that concerns us; Satan will have nothing to say against us in the evil day, nothing which will weaken us in our conflicts with him. If the conscience is not good, if righteousness is not realised, we have no strength; we must hide ourselves in the day of battle. When Satan attacks the children of God, he does it according to the holiness of God, and they would be overthrown by having things on their conscience about which a worldly person would feel no uneasiness.
- JRS> The righteousness of right living is the righteousness that God boasted of in Job before Satan. And this is the righteousness that Job insisted upon before his accusers as did Paul when he spoke of having nothing against himself (yet that he was not justified by this). Job's friends tried, as Satan does, to take away the breastplate of righteousness (integrity) from Job, but they could not—and God rebuked them for it.
 - But be it well understood that this righteousness imparted does not justify me before God. Before Him, no one could stand (Psalm 130). But it does assure me and give me confidence of my standing before Him that I am changed. One of the biggest parts of that change is that I confess my sin and look to Christ.
 - You see, there are two ways that righteousness is spoken of. In First John, this righteousness here mentioned is spoken of when it says that all who are born of God practice righteousness. Yet, at the same time, John says that if we say we

- have no sin we deceive ourselves. So what gives? Are we righteous or are we sinful? We are righteous in that we are following Christ and are not committing fellowship breaking sins, and that when we do, we confess them; yet all along the way, a part of that righteousness is also in coming before God only on the basis of Christ. Henry is right—before Satan and the world, we may defend our righteousness (blamelessness), but before God, we must have Christ.
- JRS> As this righteousness—this breastplate—is something we can take off and put on, it is obviously not justifying righteousness. Justifying righteousness can be rested in or not rested in, but that is not the righteousness itself, but the faith in the righteousness. But this practical righteousness can be taken off.
 - JRS> Yet, maybe this is justifying righteousness—because the call here is to stand “having girded (aorist middle participle)” your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness.
 - Does that mean at conversion when these were once and for all put on (if this is justifying righteousness)?
 - No, it refers to the aorist imperative in verse 13 to “take up the whole armour of God.” verse 14 speaks of standing now, having taken this action to arm yourself. This is something you do.
 - JRS> Further to this point, the call for faith comes later—it is the shield. Here is where we are commanded, above all, to rest in what Christ has done. Here we are commanded to maintain that purity of conscience, that holiness, by righteous, obedience living.
 - JRS> One becomes very weak when he does not have integrity. When he does not maintain an upright walk before the Lord, he is not guarding his relationship with the Lord. That relationship will be brought into doubt.
 - Psalm 143:2 is what we declare to the Lord:
 - Ps 143:2: Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no one living is righteous.
 - HEND> The breastplate is a devout and holy life, moral rectitude.
 - Scripture
 - Rom 6:13, And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.”
 - Rom 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”
 - In Ephesians, *righteousness* is employed in the ethical sense:
 - Eph 4:24: “and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”
 - Eph 5:9: “(for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),”

- In 2 Cor 6:7, Paul mentions the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. This would enable you to foil an attack from any quarter. The breastplate went from the neck to the thighs, and had a piece in the front and in the back.
- Without such a life, the Christian has no defense against Satan's accusations, no assurance of salvation, and power to attack because the testimony of his lips is rendered ineffective by his life.
- JRS> One thing is certain—whether imputed or imparted, the righteousness comes from Christ.
- WILLIAM GURNALL> Reasons to maintain holiness (righteousness):
 - It is God's design for us to do so (His decree, His purpose in sending Christ, His purpose in regeneration, His purpose in His word, His design in providence).
 - Satan's design is against it
 - It is excellent (beautiful, evidence for heaven, capacitates for communion with God, necessary for true peace, has an influence on others, is a pillar for the nations).
- WILLIAM GURNALL> How are we to express holiness?
 - In our behaviour toward sin
 - In our duties of worship
 - In our worldly employments (fair dealings, diligence)
 - In our relations
- WILLIAM GURNALL> How to maintain holiness
 - Be sure of your foundation
 - Keep your eye on the rule by which you are to walk
 - Do not look to purchase anything from God by your legal standing
 - Look to Christ's example
 - Walk in dependence on God
 - Look to the company you keep
 - Get a friend to monitor your life
 - Think about how much you will wish you had been holy on your deathbed
 - Fortify against discouragement.
- JRS> How will an upright life protect you in the day of evil?
 - If it is trials, as Job, it will not be so easy to curse God because:
 - There is a habit in place—for you to live by grace with integrity
 - You delight in the communion you have with God and do not want to break it—you find it better to serve Him in trials than to be free of trials without Him.

- If you have been grumbling, do not expect that you will remain true to God when a bigger trial breaks out.
- If it is temptation, as with Joseph and his mistress, it will not be so appealing to you when the seductress comes knowing.
 - You will say, “how can I do this and sin against God?”
 - You will believe it to be better to commune with God without whatever the temptation is that is set before you than it is to have the thing without God.
 - If you have been dreaming of sin, don’t expect to stand when it comes knocking.

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

15 kai upodhsameni touv podav en etoimasia tou euaggeliou thv eirhnhv

HEND QUESTION> Am I prepared for the fight?

HEND suggests that this refers to a readiness that comes from the gospel—an assurance that prepares you for the battle.

- HEND> The Roman soldiers wore shoes with studs in them that enabled them to travel very quickly. This also had a large part in the success of Alexander the Great.
- HEND> The person who believes that Gospel which gives us peace has a huge burden lifted off of him. This gives him courage and zeal to fight.
- JRS> This is true enough. We cannot stand in the battle unless we are confident in our relationship to God.
 - Eph 2:15-17: “having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.”
 - Rom 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Ro 5:1 NKJV)
- JRS> n.b. from Romans 5—our trials will completely overwhelm us if we are not assured that we have peace with God. We will have that nagging, underlying, constant turmoil that perhaps the divine majesty is against us. This will make us constantly fainthearted and insecure. But when there is justification—when there is assurance that God even gave His Son for us—all this insecurity gives way to confidence that enables us to take whatever Satan throws at us. Job’s friends tried to shake Job’s confidence that he was reconciled, but Job stood firmly in the evil day. Job’s friends come after us in trials too, but we must not listen to them. We have more reason than Job to be confident, because now we know what Christ has done for us.

- Wear these shoes at all times brothers and sisters, or you will be swallowed up in trials.

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

16 epi pasin analabontev ton yureon thv pistewv en w dunhsesyte panta ta belh tou ponhrou ta pepurwmena sbesai

HEND QUESTION: Am I able to defend myself against Satan's attack?

HEND> *the shield of faith* is the weapon that quenches fiery darts

- HEND> The Roman soldier had a shield that was about four feet high and 2½ feet long. It was covered with leather. The enemy would shoot arrows that had been set on fire and dipped in pitch, but with this shield, the arrows could be quenched and stopped.
 - HEND> Paul mentions quite a few examples of Satan's fiery darts such as tribulation, anguish, persecution, and famine, which missiles can enkindle doubt, lust, greed, vanity, envy, etc. To repel these, we must look away from self to God, relying on His word of revelation and promise.
 - HEND> Things looked hopeless to Jairus, but Jesus said, "Fear not, only believe." (Luke 8:49-50)
 - Faith is more than a weapon of defense. It is also the victory that overcomes the world.
- JRS> Part of this might be the idea of Israel out of Egypt by faith, and Israel into Canaan by faith. They could not do this without trusting in God. The wicked one's darts were all the doubts and insecurity that they could not go on for the Lord without being destroyed.
 - We need this faith when we are small and despised and people are laughing at us and mocking us.

PNT> So faith, the faith that fully trusts in God and never doubts, is the best of all defenses. It will quench, stop, put out all the doubts, whisperings and evil suggestions of the wicked.

- JRS> Faith is that holistic trust in all of life, recognising that God is doing and that we can trust Him to do for us what is good.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

17 kai thn perikefalaiian tou swthriou dexasytai kai thn macairan tou pneumatov o estin rhma yeou

helmet of salvation

- HEND QUESTION> Same as above
- HEND> In 1 Thes 5:8, Paul also identifies the helmet with the hope of salvation (and here with salvation itself).
- JRS> This is God's deliverance. We do not deliver ourselves, but we wait upon the Lord who is our salvation to deliver us.
- JRS> It is rather difficult to see what the real difference is between the gospel of peace, faith, and salvation,
 - Unless it is that peace is the relation we have with God, faith is what receives and holds on to that relation, and salvation is the result of that relation.

sword of the Spirit

- HEND QUESTION> Have I learned the art of offensive warfare?
- JRS> We are told exactly what this is—it is the word—God's utterance.
 - With it we both defend ourselves and penetrate the enemies' ranks. It was first spoke by Him, then transmitted into writing by His servants, and now proclaimed by the servants He has appointed.
 - We must not deviate from it, or we will surely fail in the battle.
- HEND> It is called the sword of the Spirit because...
 - It is given by the Spirit
 - It is applied to the heart by the Spirit.
- HEND> Soldiers for Christ
 - handle the word
 - heed the word
 - hide it in their hearts
 - hold it forth among the nations.
- HEND> The word is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 - By means of the sword, man's guilt and sinful condition is exposed, and men are led to salvation and thanksgiving. Doubts and fears are dispelled, assurance of salvation is given, and Satan is put to flight. Jesus answered all of Satan's attacks by the word.

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

18 dia pashv proseuchv kai dehsewv proseucomenoi en panti kairw en pneumati kai eiv auto touto agrupnountev en pash proskarterhsei kai dehsei peri pantwn twn agiwn

Armed with Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14-b

Halifax: 16 November 2008

Introduction:

- Review of our need for armour...
- Review of the belt of sincerity

I. What is the breastplate of righteousness?

A. First, let me define the terms...

1. What is a breastplate?
2. What is righteousness?

B. There are two ways that persons are called righteous in the Bible...

1. Persons are called righteous who have Christ's righteousness imputed to them.
2. Persons are called righteous who live a righteous life (righteous in their conduct).
 - a. Believers are all being renewed in righteous conduct (Eph 4:24)
 - b. A few examples of persons said to be righteous in their conduct.
 - c. Righteousness by conduct is dependent on the Lord...
 - 1) It is the gift of God's grace
 - 2) It begins with dependence on Christ for imputed righteousness.

C. What sort of righteousness is the breastplate of righteousness?

1. I would submit to you that it refers to blameless conduct.
2. But remember that righteous conduct cannot exist without faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ...

II. How does the breastplate of righteousness protect you?

- A. It establishes you in a habit of righteousness.
- B. It gives you peace and assurance which you will not want to abandon.
- C. It gives you confidence against those who would accuse you.

III. How do you maintain the breastplate of righteousness?

- A. First of all, be diligent to obey in the little things—every day...
- B. Secondly, be careful to keep a short account with the Lord (confess your sins)
- C. Thirdly, make the resolution of Paul in Acts 24:16 your own...
- D. Fourthly, look to Christ!
 1. Look to His example.
 2. Then look to His strength...

Conclusion: